

I would like to comment on how radio stations are serving the community in relation the amount of airtime local music artists receive, why local music is important to the community and possible steps the FCC can take to encourage broadcasters to better serve the public in this area.

In recent years there has been a continuing trend of deregulation in the broadcast industry leading to a diminished amount of locally owned radio stations. Many stations have come into the hands of large, national companies like Clear Channel. This has greatly reduced competition between broadcasters in the local sense. Market forces are no longer present in communities where monopolies exist. Without the presence of competition locally there is more pressure on broadcasters to make a profit than to serve the need of their local communities. As a result the local music scene has suffered.

I am concerned that the practices of national playlists, voice-tracking and payola have hurt local music artist's chances to receive airplay within the communities they perform in and are a part of. There is not enough programming that facilitates what the local community would in fact like to hear. Stations do democratically play what the public wants to hear in the form of "all request shows" but the public cannot request what it has not heard. Much of the public will only go the performance of a band or buy the CD of artists they have heard, thus the radio is a means for artists to let the public know that they are an option.

The local music as an art is an integral part of a community in the sense that a communities color, culture, and beliefs are reflected in its music. As a member of my local community I would like to hear the bands that I see perform in my community played on the radio. I would also like to hear the different artists that exist and are available to me where I live. I would like to see local bands have the opportunity to receive airtime without having to compete with the budgets of label supported artists who are promoted at a national level. This would be beneficial to both the community and the artists who live in them.

To accomplish this, local communities are in need of the FCC making new policies that require broadcasters to devote a percentage of their programming to local artists and to report to the FCC and their communities proof that they have done so. The term "local" should also be strictly defined in relatively small units. For example a station broadcasting in the Dallas/Fort Worth area should not include bands merely from Texas, or the north-east region of Texas, as part of its local programming, but the artists should be from the area which the program is being broadcasted to. The FCC should also encourage radio stations to make it easy to receive feedback from the community related to its local artist programming, perhaps through the stations website or a toll-free phone number that is regularly mentioned on the air. Broadcast Stations should also be required to reveal when programming contains voice-tracking or is part of a national playlist, so that the public better understands what it is listening to and where it's coming from.

Thank you for allowing me to comment on how broadcast stations are serving my community and I would appreciate your efforts to see local music better represented on the public's airwaves.